

BEAUTY AND DIPLOMACY IN COMIC OPERA.

"L'Africaine" To Be Produced in Washington and Baltimore by Society Belles and Members of the Foreign Legations.

SUCH A SOCIAL SENSATION!

Charity To Be the Cloak for a Lot of Sweet Singing, Graceful Posing and No End of Good Natured Tomfoolery.

ORCHESTRA LED BY A MARQUIS

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]

HERALD BUREAU, CORNER FIFTEENTH AND G STREETS, N. Y.,

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17, 1891.

"L'Africaine"—THE CAST.

Inez, Princess of Portugal.....Miss Margaret Elliott

Selika, Queen of Madagascar.....Mrs. Charles Whelan

Vasco da Gama.....Mr. Pierre Stevens

Vasco's attendant.....Baron Beck-Fris

Don Pedro.....Mr. Homer

Bernard, King of Portugal.....Mr. Robert Lee Keeling

Chimpanzee.....Mr. Paul Hunt

Giant, page.....Miss Hilda Everett

Inez's attendants, Grand Inquisitors, chorus, etc.

Here's a good one!

All we have done hitherto fades into absolute obscurity beside it. An opera coached and trained and stage managed by amateurs, with an amateur cast, an amateur chorus bristling with

Beauty, distinction and talent, and every member a star, and an orchestra with a real "kick" and a swell society man playing first and second violin.

This is not all, either. The talent which could so successfully develop all this artistic merit could do more, and it did it. The HERALD has to thank three members of the cast for the beautiful illustrations it presents, and, greatest surprise of all, their modesty prevents my naming them.

Such, then, is the aggregation of talent which will present Monday evening, at the Lincoln Music Hall, the burlesque opera of "L'Africaine" before an audience that could not be surpassed in social or official importance in America.

An event! Yes; more than that—a standpoint. No more wispy-washy theatricals will do here after this. Even the generous mantle of charity will not permit any more mistakes after this artistic criterion has been established in the amateur operatic soul.

Hard work.

Pretty hard work for amateurs. Yes, slightly! If they were to taste the real triumphs of the stage they had to go through this hardship. The latter, however, did not mean anything more dreadful than patient application at rehearsals and the giving up of two or three dozen balls and dinners in consequence.

The master minds at the head of this enterprise have been the Misses Hunt, daughters of Mrs. Hunt, the widow of the distinguished American painter, William Morris Hunt. The family have spent the winter of late years in this city, and the young ladies have been the stimulus to nearly all the fine musical events that have been a marked feature in social entertainments. They can both sing and play the piano, the violin and other instruments. They are as clever with the brush as if that were their only highly cultivated talent. Besides, they are charming conversationalists, and their mother's home is the resort of the most cultured people in society.

Their ability to direct any musical event is so

well recognized that the moment it was known that they were coaching an opera for the sweet cause of charity all society rushed to help them. And such a time as they have had of it for the past three months! Just think of it! Managing a cast with each star in a different city and a chorus at home. Of course they were sure of them all, but a bird tells me, and mind you they do not, that nobody knows all the trials and anxieties who are "not in it."

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Two years ago "L'Africaine" was presented at the Casino at Bar Harbor. Some of that famous cast are in it now. They made eighteen hundred hard earned dollars for sweet charity, amid the applause of the swelled sort of an audience. Miss de Castro, who owns the score, has never let it be sung except for charitable purposes.

The Misses Hunt have had to transmute much of the music. Having the keenest sense of the ridiculous, they are able to enter fully into the exquisite satire which permeates the entire thing, and their handling has heightened its effect.

In the staging their experience has also been of immense benefit. The costumes have been directed by them. Miss Hunt is retaining all the scenery with the assistance of a costumer from Baltimore, who has made them all.

With perfect shrewdness, and the comical situations where parodies on the great passions, love and jealousy, are worked up with a master hand are continuous. Here is a brief sketch of it:

ACT FIRST.

In the first act scenes 1 and 2 represent the royal palace in Portugal. Princess Inez, who is the daughter of Gama, a pretender to her hand. He wins her love, but the stern parent in the person of the King gives his consent only on condition that Vasco discovers the distant land of Madagascar. Vasco consents if he can go in command of a royal expedition. The King promises, but before Sir Vasco, with his new title of "Lord of Conquest and Knight of the Long Hair," gets off another pretender to the hand of Inez bobs up, and the ship has to wait while he fights his duel.

The King stops the duel before anybody gets hurt and Sir Vasco sails. Princess Inez bemoans his departure, announces her intention to retire to a monastery to await his return, but changes her mind and thinks the time will pass more quickly if she flirts with the other principal in the duel—Don Pedro de Robinson.

ACT SECOND.

Act 2 is on the island of Madagascar. Queen Selika reclines on a dais, with the chimpanzee at her feet in mute devotion. She remembers her situation and says she awaits the coming of the "ideal man"—"one whose vast and kindly form shall overshadow me like a giant, and whose black blood will rain down lightning from the sky." The chimpanzee goes out utterly crushed. Selika kneels and utters a prayer. She utters a prayer, and Selika kneels and utters a prayer.

ACT THIRD.

Act 3 is back again in Portugal. The court welcomes Sir Vasco on his return and asks him to relate his adventures. He remembers nothing of the beautiful island but "milk toast, a blasted head and some blasted heathen." The King, indignant at Vasco's failure, orders him to be banished to prison "until he shall have discovered the Northwest Passage."

Scene 4 and 5.—The prison. Vasco is studying a map. Wedding bells are heard through the grated windows. Grand Inquisitor enters with cards inviting him to witness the marriage of Princess Inez and his hated rival, Don Pedro. He declines on account of a "previous engagement." In rushes Inez, avowing that she still loves him, but must mind her father. Vasco repulses her as faithless.

The noise of the tumult and war whoops are heard outside. In comes Selika with her royal possessions in a carpet bag. The royal ladies have a high old time over Vasco, but the dusky Queen is victorious and breaks jail with him.

ACT FOURTH.

Act 4 is in Madagascar. Vasco is asleep in the Queen's garden and Selika fans him. He dreams and murmurs the name of "Inez." Selika has enough then; she "kicks the royal cage" and is ready for their speedy marriage. Vasco goes to get into his wedding trousseau when he hears the voice of Inez. She has evidently just been shipwrecked, and bemoans sadly the loss of her poodle and the death of her husband, Don Pedro. In comes Selika to find Vasco and Inez in each other's arms.

Scene 2.—The dead body of Vasco is in the desert. Selika, having tenderly buried the corpse as the desert faithful lover, decides to die under the upas tree. In comes the chimpanzee, who suggests the urgent solicitation she reluctantly decides to reward his devotion and to live for the present.

The entire company comes in to see the harmonious arrangement of all the troubles, and to take part in the two royal marriages. The ghost of Don Pedro insists on introducing itself, but is bidden summarily to depart and not to throw any damper on the festivities.

THE CAST IN DETAIL.

Miss Margaret Elliott, who takes the part of Inez, needs no introduction to the New York public. Those who have heard her sing at Dr. Heber Newton's church remember with pleasure her rare, beautiful soprano voice. She was a favorite pupil

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